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THE ANSWER OF The New Converts OF FRANCE, TO A Pastoral Letter FROM A *PROTESTANT MINISTER.*

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THE ANSWER OF THE NEW CONVERTS OF FRANCE,

To a Paſtoral Letter from a *Proteſtant* Miniſter.

IT is not, Sir, to give you an Account of our Conduct that we now write to you; we know you are not in the Circumſtance of approving it, and we are much troubled at it. Nor is it to Anſwer either your injurious Language, or your Menaces; the Holy Ghoſt confirms us againſt them both, when he

1 Pet. 3. 13, 14. tells us, *Who is he that can hurt you, if you do only that which is good; but and if you ſuffer for Juſtice ſake, you ſhall be happy. Fear not what they would make you fear, nor trouble your ſelves; but ſanctifie our Lord God in your hearts, and be always ready to ſatisfie every one that asks you a reaſon of the hope which is in you.* It is therefore in obedience to theſe laſt words we have now broken that profound Silence, in which the Moderation that our Faith, as yet but tender, inſpires into us, would retain us, were we not oblig'd to render an Account of that Faith, and to hinder the weak from being ſcandaliz'd at the Reproaches you have caſt upon us, and the Church from being diſhonor'd by thoſe who are not happy enough to know her. We ſhall not diſtinguiſh among us, as you have done, the *Libertines*, thoſe *Chriſtians* whom you call *cowardly*; nor thoſe whom you think you honor by the name of ſimple *Apoſtates*: becauſe we cannot believe, but that Diviſion was rather a Figure and an Artifice then any real Effect of your Sincerity. For we are perſwaded there is not one of theſe three

three pretended States, tho' never ſo Impious and Libertine, but your Zeal would willingly draw back again into your Party, and not one but you would rejoyce to ſee become a Martyr for your Religion. The haſte you would thereupon make to revoke the Sentence againſt them, ſhould make you conſider with how much raſhneſs you have paſs'd it. Doubtleſs, Sir, you never thought of this, when you durſt pronounce, *There was no further ſacrifice remaining for their ſins*, and like a God upon Earth, condemn'd them *to devouring Flames*.

Without examining too nicely this Judgment, God himſelf lets us ſee the raſhneſs, of it, when he aſſures us the Prieſthood of *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall never have an end, becauſe he will offer eternally the Sacrifice of his Croſs for the Redemption of Sinners. *The tranſgreſſions even of the wicked*, ſay what you will, *God will not remember*, as the Scripture tells us, *from the moment he converts himſelf from them:* for *I will not* (ſaith the Lord by the mouth of his Prophet) *the death of a ſinner, but that he ſhould return from* Pſal. 109. Ezek. 18. 22, 23.

from his wickedneſs and live. But without doubt you will ſay this Converſion conſiſts in returning into your Church, which in your Letter you invite us to. But can this Propoſition move a *Chriſtian*, if it could not have been propos'd to him through every Age ſince the Death of *Jeſus Chriſt*? And could this have been done Two hundred years ſince, before you had any ſuch thing as a Church? It is of no purpoſe to tell us, as we have ſo often heard, That your Church ſubſiſted always, but that it was inviſible. For can the Church ſubſiſt
Rom. 10. 14. without Faith; and Faith, ſaith St. *Paul*, without Preaching; and Preaching without ſome Action that is both publick and viſible? Have not you your ſelves taught
Conf. de Foy. 28. us, That *where the Word of God is not received, and where the Sacraments are not in uſe, no Man can judge, properly ſpeaking, that there is a Church.* All theſe *Conſequences* have they not made you own, That at that time *the State of the Church was diſcontinu'd?* How then could any one propoſe to a *Neophyte* to embrace that Faith which they could not make him know?

Never-

Nevertheleſs can we, Sir, believe, that for ſo vaſt a time, that according to your ſelves is from the Fourth or Fifth Age to this day, in which you tell us the viſible Church, which was no other but the *Roman*, was fill'd with Errors, or at leaſt ſince the Tenth Age, when you aſſure us ſhe was fall'n into all manner of Superſtitions and Idolatries: Can we (I ſay) believe, that during ſo long a ſpace of years, the Gates of Heaven were ſhut, the Blood and Death of *Jeſus Chriſt* were ineffectual, the Kingdom of the Saviour of Mankind ceaſed, and the Empire of the Devil was full, entire, and abſolute within the Houſe of the Son of God? Do's not *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf teach us to the contrary, That *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church? and that he has pray'd for her, that her faith ſhall never fail*; in ſhort, that *the holy Spirit ſhall remain with her for ever?* S. Mat. 16. 18. S. Luc. 22. 32. S. John 14. 16.

We formerly, Sir, believ'd according to the ancient Principles you taught us, That is was enough to ſhew the truth of theſe words; That there was a ſmall number of the Faithful who liv'd according to outward

ward appearances, in the Communion of the *Roman* Church, but whoſe Hearts you aſſur'd us never adher'd to its Worſhip; But now you not only bid us *preſerve our ſelves from that Illuſion*, but alſo tell us, that *nothing is more criminal then ſuch a thought*; *That ſuch a Devotion is injurious to God*; *That God requires all or nothing*; *and that ſince he is the Redeemer of both, he will be glorifi'd by both. For 'tis not enough* (ſay you after St. *Paul*) *to believe in your heart to juſtice*; *but you muſt profeſs it with your mouth to ſalvation.* We believe you, Sir, and we acknowledge our ſelves oblig'd to you for ſo kindly contributing to confirm us more and more in the Church we are ſo lately enter'd into, by leaving us no further doubt of the newneſs of yours: For from henceforth where can we believe your Church ſubſiſted during ſo many Ages, when you had neither Temples, nor Service, nor Aſſembly, nor Preachers, nor Sacraments, nor Faithful? You have endeavor'd hitherto to come off by telling us, as occaſion ſerv'd, ſometimes that it was viſible, and ſometimes that it was inviſible. You ſaid your

ſelf

ſelf to *M. de Meaux*, That *before the* Reformation, *the truly Faithful were mingled with the reſt in the ſame outward Profeſſion.* But thanks be to Heaven, we are now likewiſe taught by you, that we cannot believe *without Illuſion, That one of the Faithful can preſerve himſelf in the outward Communion of the* Roman *Church, altho' his Heart do's not incline to the Worſhip; and that there is nothing more criminal then ſuch a thought.* There remains then no further doubt, but that, according to your ſelves, not only the State of the Church, but even the Church it ſelf, to make uſe of your own Diſtinctions, was diſcontinu'd and abrogated for the ſpace of many Ages, for that it could not maintain it ſelf within the Communion of the *Roman*, which alone had Churches and publick Worſhip: How can we reconcile this with what the Holy Ghoſt teaches us, That the Church is the Handy-work of the Son of God; *That ſhe is his moſt dear and faithful Spouſe, that he purchaſed upon the Croſs by the Effuſion of his moſt precious Blood; That he himſelf is the Head; That ſhe is the Pillar and Ground of Truth;*

P. 120.

Epheſ. 5. 25, 26, 27.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

S. Mat. 18. 17. *Truth*; *That she is to be our Judge in all our Controversies*, and so Infallible, *that whosoever do's not submit to her Decisions, is to be esteem'd as a Heathen or Publican*; in short, *That he will never forsake her, and that he will be always with her to the end of the World?* A *Christian* instructed in such Lessons drawn out of the Holy Writ, can he find any difficulty to incline favourably towards the *Roman* Church, which you your selves confess has stood from *Jesus Christ* and the Apostles down to this Day, either in full Purity, or at least with some Alterations that you pretend have crept into it? We will not enter into an Examination of the Errors that you impute to it, that is not now our Business: but we must needs say for our own Justification, That among those that gave us the greatest horror, there are some of them in which we see you had more Obstinacy on your sides then Reason.

The *Real Presence*, for Example, of *Jesus Christ* in the *Eucharist*, was always represented to us as a Rock of Scandal in the *Roman* Church, as a Shelve to Shipwrack

Salva-

Salvation, and as a Monſter in Religion: yet this Doctrine, deteſtable as it is, was nevertheleſs receiv'd into your Church, and into your Communion with the *Lutherans*, who never doubted of it, and Preach'd it publickly. It is in vain to tell us, The *Lutherans* 'tis true believe that *Jeſus Chriſt* is preſent in the *Sacrament*, but they don't adore him: For not only your own Writers, as *Calvin*, *Bezá*, and others, condemn their Practice in this, but maintain, That if *Jeſus Chriſt* be in the Bread, he ought to be there adored: And your own Church has declar'd by the Mouth of *Daillé*, That *if the Subject matter which is call'd the Sacrament of the Euchariſt, be in its ſubſtance not Bread, as ſhe believes, but the Body of Chriſt, as thoſe of* Rome *hold, it is evident that it may and ought to be ador'd, becauſe the Body of Chriſt is an adorable Subject*: Seeing then according to you it is allow'd to believe, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is in the *Sacrament*; it ought likewiſe to be permitted, according to your own Tenets, and according to your own Authors, thoſe who believe him preſent, are oblig'd to adore him there. So P. 66.

that properly ſpeaking, the Adoration of the *Sacrament* is nothing elſe but a Cavil that you make with the Church of *Rome*, to colour your Diviſion: As the Communion under one Species is another much more viſible, and as ill grounded.

Dim. 53. *Every one* (ſay you) *ought indifferently to receive the Cup, according to the Command of* Jeſus Chriſt, *againſt which it is unlawful to attempt any thing.* By this Article of your Faith we have been always poſſeſs'd with a belief of the neceſſity of Communion in both Kinds, and always thought the contrary Practice an overthrowing of the Conſtitution of the *Sacrament:* nor ſhould we yet have doubted of it, had not your own Practice at length open'd our Eyes, and diſabus'd us. But now when we hear you determine in your Diſcipline, Art. 7. c. 12. *That the Bread alone ought to be Adminiſtred to ſuch as cannot drink Wine, provided they make a Proteſtation that it is not through contempt*: Now when we ſee this Cuſtom eſtabliſh'd in your own Temples, why do you condemn that in the Church of *Rome*, which you allow and practice in your own?

own? If the Command of the Cup be positive, it is indispensible; if the Communion in both Kinds be of Divine Institution, it cannot admit of a Modification. But (say you) are we oblig'd to Impossibilities? Without examining this pretended Impossibility, which you suppose in the Faithful upon very slight Grounds, we will suppose it with you. But ought this want of Possibility in any to receive a *Sacrament*, destroy the *Sacrament*? This Infirmity may dispence with a Person from Receiving the *Sacrament*, and justifie his abstaining from it: but it can justifie neither Minister nor Church that gives it so divided and separated, if God has declar'd it indivisible and inseparable. In fine, if the retrenchment of one of the Species be a violation of the *Sacrament*, and of the Command of *Jesus Christ*, no Church nor Reason can authorize it. What can we then conclude, when we see your Church, as well as that of *Rome*, practise the same Retrenchment, but that the Communion in both Kinds is neither of necessity, nor commanded.

It is much the ſame concerning the *Real Preſence*. A Man that beholds *Chriſtianity* divided between the Adherents of *Rome*; *Luther*, and *Calvin*, and finds that by the Doctrine taught in the Churches of the two firſt, it is abſolutely neceſſary for his Salvation to believe, That *Jeſus Chriſt* is really and ſubſtantially in the *Euchariſt*; and hears you your ſelves ſaying, That *this Belief*, againſt which you are ſuch declar'd Enemies, *is no obſtacle to Salvation*; *that it contains nothing contrary either to Piety or Charity, or the Honor due to God, or the Welfare of Mankind*; could this Man determine with himſelf to follow any other Doctrine then that which he is aſſur'd of on all Sides to be abſolutely neceſſary, or at leaſt no way prejudicial to Salvation?

Daillé Apol. p. 43.

Believe us, Sir, theſe inſenſible, tho' important Steps of yours, have had greater power over our Conſciences, then all the Dragoons, ſo terrible and ſo barbarous as your Pen has ſtudy'd to deſcribe them. But ſuppoſe the apprehenſion of them had made ſome of us reflect upon theſe things, which perhaps we had otherwiſe never ſo much

much as thought of; would this conclude any thing but what St. *Paul* ſaith, That *Kings are Gods Miniſters for our good?* Can you blame any *Chriſtians* for Examining the Cauſes of a Perſecution before it comes upon them, ſince *Jeſus Chriſt* has promis'd to recompence only ſuch as ſuffer for his and for Juſtice ſake? The Spirit of the Goſpel, do's it oblige us to meet Death boldly for Error, or for Truth? or is it the Suffering, or the Cauſe for which they ſuffer, that makes the Martyrs? If the Cauſe then be found to be Man's, and not that of God's, have you reaſon to diſclaim againſt thoſe who have only avoided temporal Puniſhments, to preſerve themſelves from thoſe which are more terrible and eternal? 'Tis then the proof of this Cauſe that deſerves your nearer application. Do not think to excuſe your ſelves by reaſon of the too great extent ſuch an Examination appears to have, to fill us with greater Confuſion and Sorrow for leaving your Church; you needed only to convince us of this one Article of your Faith, which ſaith, That *God rais'd up certain Men in an extraordinary manner,* *Art.* 31.

ner, to Model the Church anew, that was fall'n into Ruine and Deſolation; Convince us, we ſay, but of this, and we ſhall always think our ſelves miſerable for being ſuch Rebels againſt the Order of Divine Providence, and endeavouring by our Infidelity to deſtroy the Work of God. But you cry, It is in vain, ſeeing we can't believe it to be the Work of God, nor have any faith for this extraordinary Miſſion. 'Tis true, *Zuinglius*, *Luther*, and *Calvin* have born that Teſtimony of themſelves: 'Tis true, they have given themſelves the Titles of *Apoſtles* and *Evangeliſts*; but ſince *Jeſus Chriſt* has ſaid, ſpeaking of himſelf, *If I bear teſtimony of my ſelf, my teſtimony is not true*, what credit can that Teſtimony claim that your Patriarchs have only given of themſelves? Where then ſhall we begin to judge? for every extraordinary Miſſion is vain and uſeleſs, if it brings not its Proof and Evidence to thoſe in favour of whom it is ſent. Shall we know their Authority by their Miracles, by their Works, or by their Doctrine? Their Miracles were never known; the Works of ſuch as are Enemies

Luth. Tract. de Ver. Eccl. Reform.
Calv. Inſtit. lib. 4. cap. 3. Sect. 4.
St. John 5. 31.

to

to Virginity, to Vows of Chaſtity, Faſting, Abſtinence, Auſterities, Penance, Confeſſion of Sins, and to the Pains requir'd for their Expiation, are too oppoſite to the Spirit of the Goſpel, either to perſwade or edifie. Their Doctrine ſuppoſes their Miſſion, as St. *Paul* tells us, and therefore proves it not: for *How ſhall they Preach*, ſaith he, *unleſs they be ſent?* Without ſo much as Examining this Doctrine to the bottom, their Diviſions, and the Contradictions that were between themſelves, and remain to this Day among their Followers, in the chief Myſteries of Faith, are they not wholly oppoſite to Truth, and the Unity of the Spirit of God? *Luther* will have it, That in the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, beſides the Bread, the Body of *Chriſt* is really, truly, and corporeally contain'd. *Calvin* denies that the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt* is contain'd in the *Sacrament*, but tells us it is however communicated there, and really and ſubſtantially receiv'd. *Zuinglius* on the contrary ſays, That *Jeſus Chriſt* is neither contain'd, nor receiv'd, nor communicated in or by the *Sacrament*, but only the Figure

Rom. 10. 15.

of *Chriſt*'s Body, and the Effects of his *Death* and *Paſſion*. Did the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts of *Jeſus Chriſt* teach after this manner? Do we find among them Contradictions in the Myſteries of Faith, or in their Doctrine? What then, Sir, would you have us think of theſe three Apoſtles and Evangeliſts of your *Reformation*? Into which of their Countries (for every one of them has his own particular) would you have us go to live in the Profeſſion of the Truth, as you adviſe us in your Letter? For 'tis in this Sence we underſtand the Reſolution which you cunningly ſuppoſe we have made, to ſtay in the Boſom of *Rome* only till we have put our Affairs in order. It ſeldom appertains to any but to God, to penetrate ſo deep into the Hearts of Men: However, Sir, make uſe of what time you have to determine to which of your three Evangeliſts we ought to ſubmit, and which we ought to relie upon. Otherwiſe be not ſurpris'd that we live and enjoy one another in that *City*, where generally all our Fathers and yours, excepting it may be two or three ſince

Jeſus

Jesus Christ and his Apostles, have been bred up; that we live peaceably in the same *Church* in which they liv'd, and therein seek that Salvation we hope they have found.

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DE LA REYNIE.

FINIS.